LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 84
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Love Letters of a Portuguese Nun

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THIS *is the only American edition of "Letters from a Portuguese Nun" giving the first seven of the correspondence; but five of which, beginning with letter viii, are usually printed. These stray leaves have drifted down to us through a period of over two centuries and seem as fresh as if but written yesterday; almost confirming Hazlitt's remark, "Words are the only things that last forever."*

PREFACE

The language of nature is universal: the same in every age and country, among no people is it foreign; nor can time render it obsolete: proceeding only from the heart, to the heart only does it speak; and wherever there is sensibility, there will it be understood. One of its principal charms is simplicity, and it is a charm of no small influence: the taste is seldom so vitiated as to be insensible to its power. But the chief excellence of the language of nature, is the force and truth with which it represents our sentiments and emotions, and the power which it possesses of commanding our sympathy.

In this language has the Portugese Nun written her impassioned letters; letters, which have never yet been read without emotion, except by the cold-hearted monster to whom they were addressed; and perhaps even his dull apathy has been compensated by the general sympathy which they have excited. On the continent, the interest which was created by their first appearance, has rather increased than abated. In the French language alone, into which they have been translated, they have already passed through more than twelve editions: and Dorat, a poet of no small talent or reputation, has made an elegant poetical version of them; and, in the introduction to his poem, he thus characterizes his original:

"These letters will excite those delicious tears which relieve the heart, not that agony of grief

which oppresses it: they breathe the most tender, the most impassioned, the most generous love; they paint the passion in all its nice gradations of shade, and all its interesting details: you behold its storms, its agitations, its momentary resolutions, its fond relapses, the delicacy of its fears, and the heroism of its sacrifices. Racine himself, the painter of nature, has not represented love in colors more lovely or more seducing, or under a form more impressive, or more beautiful.

"In short, the Portugese Letters display, with a most accurate delicacy and truth, the heart of a woman deeply impressed with love: her soul now intoxicated with bliss, now overwhelmed with sorrow; and describing all her emotions with the naivete of genuine feeling, and the glowing warmth of passion. The fair, who have loved, will find in them what they have thought and felt a thousand times, when they have been writing to their lovers; and lovers, at least those who have been fortunate enough to inspire a delicate passion, will think, in reading them, that they are re-perusing the letters of their mistresses."

Such are the Letters, of which a translation is now offered to the English reader. Of the unfortunate writer, and of the person to whom they were addressed, as much as is known will be found in the following historical introduction.

HISTORICAL

INTRODUCTION.

The following Letters have obtained the title of Portuguese, from their having been written in that language, by a nun or canoness of Lisbon. Their history as accurately as it can be traced, it this:

About the year 1663, Noel Bouton de Chamilly, of a noble and distinguished family of Burgundy, many of whom, before 1400, we find among the chamberlains of the Duke of Burgundy, went to Portugal; where he served as captain of horse under the Marshal de Schomberg. During the leisure which his military avocations permitted, he became enamoured of Marianne, a young Portuguese nun or canoness, in whom he excited a passion still more violent than what he felt himself. He was not however an Adonis, such as the gallant court of Louis XIV. sent into the different countries of Europe to enslave the fair, and swell the number and species of its conquests. He possessed not the talents or accomplishments of Grammont, nor the graces and wit of Hamilton. He resembled rather a Hercules in strength and corpulence, if we may trust the portrait which St. Simon has left us of him. "He was," says he, in his Memoirs, "a stout fat man: to see and hear him, we could never imagine how he could have inspired such an exalted passion, as that which is the soul of the famous Portuguese Letters;

and he was so dull and heavy, that no one could suppose he possessed any talents for war."—*Memoires de St. Simon*, tom. iv. p. 2, 4, *Supplement, edit. de Paris*, 1789.

He had, however, considerable abilities as a general. After having passed through every step of military rank, it was he who signalized himself by that celebrated defense of Graave, in 1675, which cost the Prince of Orange 16,000 men, and placed de Chamilly in the rank of the most illustrious warriors of France. As a recompense of his glorious services, he was made Marshal of France in 1703, and knight of the orders in 1705.

He died at Paris in 1715, aged 79, leaving no issue by his wife, who was still more disagreeable in her person than himself, but whose wit, conversation, and elegant manners, threw a veil over her want of personal charms, and contributed indeed, in no small degree, to the advancement of her husband, independent of his military merit.—(*Vide Journal de Verdun*, February, 1714, p. 140.) He had two nephews, the one Francis Bouton, Count de Chamilly, born in 1663, Ambassador from France to the Court of Denmark, and afterwards Lieutenant-general of the army in 1722; the other Louis Francis Bouton de Chamilly, Abbot of La Coutre, at Mans, who died in 1705.

We are indebted for these Portuguese Letters to the passion with which Chamilly inspired the tender Marianne during his stay in Portugal; a passion which his return to France rendered still more violent: her grief for his

absence being inconsolable, she sought some relief in writing to him.

Chamilly, remaining in France, had the foolish vanity to show these letters to his friends, and it is to this very folly that we are indebted for the possession of them. He confided the originals to the Counsellor Subligny, to translate and publish them. Subligny is the author of a comedy in prose, written in ridicule of the Andromaque of Racine, 1668; of the False Clelia, a romance, which passed through five editions; and of some writings in favor of Racine, after having written against him.

The nun herself appears, from her own account, to have been born in the middling rank of society; but her letters bear the stamp of a most generous and exalted mind: they may be ranked with those of Heloise to Abelard, to which, though posterior in point of time, they are not inferior in merit.

Here, then, were two women, two nuns, who wrote with that exquisite and inconceivable charm, with that accent of passion and of love, which vibrates through every heart, and to which their sex, solitude, and devotion, gave additional effect: deriving their sentiments from the inexhaustible sources of sensibility and tenderness, while all ideas of self were entirely absorbed in the fond contemplation of the object beloved.

The fate of the unfortunate Marianne has never been known; those who can feel for sensibility, and the tender devotion of love, will hope that time wore from her heart the image

of her unworthy lover, and that in the repose of her convent she regained her tranquility; but alas! this is scarcely to be hoped; it is more probable that the unhappy passion, in which her very existence seemed to be involved, soon broke a heart, too tender and impassioned to survive the apathy of despair.

LOVE LETTERS OF A PORTUGUESE NUN

LETTER I

It is possible, then, that you can for an instant have been angry with me, and that I, with a passion the most delicate that ever was felt, can have given you cause for a moment's vexation! Alas! what remorse must be mine had I been wanting in the fidelity that is due to you, since, while I can only be accused of an excess of tenderness, I yet condemn myself as the cause of your anger. But wherefore should it occasion this remorse? Have I not had reason to complain? And should I not alarm your affection, could I without murmuring endure your reserve? Oh my God! I am continually reproaching my own soul that it does not sufficiently discover to you the ardour of its emotions, and still you wish to conceal from me every secret of yours.

When my looks have too much softness they obey but the tenderness of my heart, and are unfaithful to its ardour. If they are too animated, my tenderness is equally dissatisfied. The most expressive actions seem to me inadequate to speak of my fondness, yet you can be reserved with me, even about trifles. How does this conduct pain me! and how would you pity me could you know to what thoughts it has given rise! But why am I thus curious? Why do I wish to search into the recesses of your

soul where I should find but indifference, and perhaps infidelity? It is kindness that renders you so reserved, and I am under an obligation to you for your mysterious conduct. You wish to spare me the misery of knowing all your indifference, and you dissemble your sentiments only from pity to my weakness.

Alas! why did you not appear thus to me in the beginning of your acquaintance! My heart might then, perhaps, have regulated itself by yours. But it was not till you found that I loved with so much ardour that you resolved to love with so little. Moderation, however, is not the characteristic of your nature. You are impetuous. I experienced it no longer ago than yesterday. But, alas! your impetuosity owes its birth to rage alone, and you feel only when you suppose that an insult is offered. Ungrateful man! what has love done that it shares so small a portion of your heart? Why is not your warmth of soul manifested to answer mine? and why is not this precipitancy employed to hasten the moments of our bliss? Who that saw your readiness to quit my apartment when anger drove you thence, would beleive you so slow to return when invited by love? But I deserve this treatment for venturing to command you. Is it for a heart so entirely your own to pretend to give you laws! You were in the right to punish it, and I ought to die with shame for having believed myself the mistress of my conduct. Too well you know how to punish this rebellion! Do you remember with what apparent tranquility you yesterday evening offered to aid my design of seeing you no more? Did your heart really

sanction this offer, or rather did you think me capable of accepting it? For, such is the delicacy of my love, that it would be more grievous to me to be suspected of a crime than to see it committed by you.

I am more jealous of what is due to my affection than to yours, and I could more easily pardon you for being unfaithful, than for suspecting me of infidelity. Yes, it is with myself I wish to be satisfied rather than with you. My tenderness is so exalted, and my esteem for you makes me so glory in it, that allowing you to doubt it appears to me the greatest of crimes. But how could you doubt it? Every thing proves it to you; and in your heart, as in mine, there is not a single emotion that does not tell you that you are loved to adoration. Love has so well taught me that, even to the moderation of my caresses, there is nothing that does not convince you of the excess of my passion. Have you never observed this effect of my compliance with your wishes? How many times have I restrained the transport of my joy on your arrival, because your eyes seemed to say that you wished me to act with more circumspection. You have done me a great injustice if you did not observe my constraint on these occasions; for such sacrifices are the most painful that I ever made you; but I do not reproach you with them. Wherefore should I care to be perfectly happy, if what is wanting to my felicity serves to increase yours? Did you show more warmth I should have the pleasure of believing myself more beloved, but you would not have that of believing yourself

so much. You would think that my fondness was owing to your attachment; but now I have the glory of thinking that you owe it to my inclination only. Yet abuse not this affectionate generosity, nor presume upon it so far as to withhold the little show of love that still remains; rather be generous in you turn. Come to me and protest that the disinterestedness of my tenderness increases your own, that when I believe all put to the hazard, I in reality hazard nothing, and that you are as tender and as faithful as I am tenderly and faithfully yours.

LETTER II

It is certainly no violation of truth to say that the lady whom we saw yesterday evening is very ugly; she dances vulgarly, and the Count de Cugne was much mistaken when he described her as a fine woman. How could you remain so long beside her? From the expression of her countenance, it appeared to me that what she said was by no means witty. Yet you conversed with her the greatest part of the evening, and had cruelty enough to tell me that you were not displeased with the conversation. What then did she say to you that was so charming? Did she tell you news of some French lady who is dear to you, or did she herself begin to grow dear; for love alone could make so long a conversation bearable.

I did not find your newly-arrived Frenchmen so agreeable; I was annoyed by them the whole evening; they said the wittiest things they

could imagine to me, and I plainly saw that they studied to do so, but they afforded me no amusement, and I believe it was their conversation that gave me the dreadful headache which I have had all night. You would know nothing of this were I not to tell you. Your servants are no doubt occupied in inquiring how that happy French woman bears her evening's fatigue, for you really made her dance enough to occasion illness. But what is there so charming in her? Do you think her more affectionate or more faithful than any other? Did you find in her a disposition more favorable to you than that which I have shewn? No! Assuredly that cannot be! You well know that only once seeing you pass by, the repose of my life was lost, and that, without any consideration either of my sex or birth, I was the first to seek opportunities of seeing you again. If she has done more than this, she waits your getting up this morning, and little Durino will doubtless find her seated by your pillow. I wish for your felicity it may be so. So dear to me in your happiness, that till my last hour I would readily consent to increase it at the expense of my own; and if you wish to regale the charmer with the perusal of this letter, do it without hesitation. What I write to you may not be useless to the advancement of your wishes. I rank high in the kingdom; I have always been flattered as possessing some share of beauty; and I believed it till your contempt undeceived me. Propose me then as an example to your new conquest. Tell her that I love you even to madness; I am willing to acknowledge it, and would rather

bring ruin upon me by the avowal, than deny a passion so dear to me. Yes, I love you a thousand times better than myself.—At the moment I am writing to you I am jealous, I own it! Your conduct yesterday has filled my heart with rage, and, since I must tell you everything, I believe you are unfaithful. Yet in spite of all this I love you more than woman ever loved. I hate the Marchioness de Furtado for having afforded you the opportunity of seeing this newcomer. I wish the Marchioness de Castro had never been born, since it was at her nuptials you were to inflict upon me the pain which I feel. I hate the inventor of dancing, I hate myself, I hate the French woman a thousand times more than all the rest; but among so many feelings of hatred, not one has the audacity to glance at you. You are always amiable in my eyes. In whatever character I behold you, even at the feet of this cruel rival who comes to disturb all my felicity, I find a thousand charms which have never existed but in you. I was even so foolish that I could not but feel delight that others saw those charms in you which I did, and though I am persuaded that to your merit I may perhaps owe the loss of your heart, I would sooner see myself condemned to the depth of despair, than wish you one encomium less than you now receive.

How is it that in your favor love can reconcile feelings so opposite?—Your merit makes me so jealous of all who approach you, that nobody can be more so; yet I would go to the end of the world to procure you new admirers. I hate this French woman with so bitter a

hatred, that there is nothing, however cruel, of which I believe myself incapable, to destroy her—yet would I wish her the felicity of being loved by you, did I think her love would render you more happy than you are. I feel myself so blest when you are satisfied, that were it necessary to sacrifice all the pleasure of my life to secure one instant of yours, I would do it without hesitation. Why are you not thus to me? Ah? did you love as I love, what happiness would be ours. Your felicity would constitute mine, and your own would by this be made more perfect. No earthly being has a heart filled with love like mine; none other than myself can so perfectly estimate your worth; and you make me pity you indeed if you are capable of attaching yourself to any other, after being accustomed to such love as mine. Believe me, my friend, it is only with me that you can be happy. I know other women by myself, and I feel that of all on earth love has destined me alone to be yours. What would become of all your delicacy, if it no longer found my heart to answer it? Those looks so eloquent and full of meaning, could other eyes reply to them like mine? No, it is impossible. We alone know how to love, and both had died of discontent had our two souls been bound to any but each other.

LETTER III

How long is your absence to continue? Will you yet pass another day without returning to Lisbon? Do you not recollect that you have

already been away two days? For my part I think you must desire to find me dead at your return, and that your design in quitting the court was not so much to accompany the king in his visit to the fleet, as to free yourself from a mistress that wearies you: in fact I do so to the extreme; I must acknowledge it. I am satisfied neither with you nor with myself. An absence of twenty-four hours brings me to death's door. What might be excess of felicity to another is not always to me. Sometimes I fancy your happiness not sufficiently great: at other times you seem to enjoy so much, I fear, you cannot owe it all to me, and I am displeased with every thing, even with the transports of my love, when I think you do not pay to them enough of attention. Your absence of mind terrifies me; I wish to see you quite composed when I know all that is passing within you; but when you pay no attention to my extravagancies you drive me to despair. I am not rational; I own it: but who can be so with excess of love like mine? I well know that, at the moment I am writing, I ought to be at ease. You are but a step from town, your duty detains you, and the illness of my brother would have prevented my seeing you during the time you have been absent. Above all, there are no women where you are, and that removes one great disquiet from my heart. But, alas! how many yet remain, and how true it is that a fond woman, if she loves as I do, finds in every thing a torment for herself. All this parade of war may wean you from the peaceful delights of love. Even now, perhaps, you look upon the moment of our

separation as a misfortune that must arrive, and you are reasoning to fortify your heart with resolution. Ah! if the sight of our cannon thus affects you, all the beauties of Europe would be less fatal to me.

Yet I wish not to oppose your duty. Your glory is dearer to me than myself, and well I know you were not born to pass all your days with me; but I would that the necessity of absence gave you as much horror as it gives to me; that you could not think of it but with trembling; and that inevitable as our separation must appear, you could not believe yourself able to sustain it.

Accuse me not, however, of being gratified by your despair; you will shed no tear that I shall not desire to wipe away. I will be the first to entreat you to bear courageously what, through excess of grief, will bring to me the grave. Nothing should console me for having been born, did I think my absence left you without consolation. What is it, then, I wish? I know not. I wish to love you all my life, even to adoration. I wish, if possible, that you might so love me. But to wish all this is, at the same time, to wish myself the most infatuated of women.

Be not disgusted with my weakness; I have never felt it but for you; an I would not exchange it for the most solid wisdom, if to be wise it were requisite to love you one degree the less. Your understanding is enchanting; you have said the same of mine; but I would forego seeing it in either of us, did it oppose the progress of our folly. Love must reign over every faculty of our souls. We must be

entirely at his disposal; and if love be satisfied, I care not that reason is displeased.

Have you been of this way of thinking since I last saw you? I tremble with apprehension that you have not entirely possessed your senses. But would it be possible for you to possess them, when speaking of a war that will remove you far from me—no! you are incapable of such treachery. You cannot have looked upon a soldier who has not drawn from you a sigh; and when you return I shall have the pleasure of hearing it said that you are at times not in your right mind, and that such has been your situation during your journey; for my part I am sure no person will speak to you of me without accusing me of the same defect. I utter extravagancies that astonish all who are about me; and if the illness of my brother did not account for my wanderings, it would be thought amongst my servants that I am become insane: little is wanting to make me so indeed. You may judge of the incoherency of my mind by that of my letter; but this assuredly cannot be displeasing to you. The ravages also which your absence has committed upon my face, ought to be more agreeable to you than the bloom of the finest complexion; and I should think myself hateful, if being deprived of the sight of you for three days had not disfigured me.

What then shall I be if I lose you for six months? Alas! no change in my person will be perceived, for I shall die in parting from you. But I hear some noise in the street, and my heart tells me that it arises from your return. Ah, my God. I am quite overcome! If

it be you who are coming, and I cannot see you on your arrival, an I shall die with anxiety and impatience; and if you come not after the hopes I have just conceived, vexation, and the transition of emotion in my soul, will deprive me of my senses.

LETTER IV

Will you, then, be always cold and listless! Can nothing have power to interrupt your repose! What must be done to disturb it? Must I, in your presence, throw myself into the arms of a rival? For, except this last act of inconstancy, which my love will never allow me to commit, I have given you reason to apprehend every other.

I accepted the arm of the Duke d'Almeida on the promenade; I contrived to sit near him at supper, and even whispered in his ears some trifles, which you might have taken for subjects of importance: yet I could cause no change in your countenance. Ingrate! Have you really the inhumanity to feel so little love for her who so well loves you? Have not my cares, my favours, and my truth, been worth one moment of your jealousy? Does he, who is more dear to me than peace or fame, so little value me, that he regards my loss without dismay? Alas! I tremble at the bare idea of losing you! You cast not a look upon another woman that does not cause me a dreadful shuddering;—you offer not a civility upon the most trifling occasion that does not cost me twenty-

four hours of despair! Yet can you see me converse under your eyes a whole evening with another, without betraying the least disquietude! Ah! you have never loved me; for too well I know what it is to love, to think that sentiments so different from mine should bear the name of love.

What would I not do to punish you for this coldness? There are some moments when I am so transported with vexation, that I could wish to love another.—But how? Amidst all this displeasure, I see nothing amiable in the world but yourself. Even yesterday, when your coldness seemed to rob you of a thousand charms, I could not help admiring all you did. In your disdain, there was I know not what of greatness that expressed the character of your soul, and it was of you I was speaking while whispering to the duke, so little am I mistress of occasions to offend you! I was dying with the desire of seeing you do something that might afford me a pretext of openly affronting you; but how should I have been able to do so? My very anger is but excess of love, and at the moment I am most incensed at your being so phlegmatic, I plainly feel I should find reasons to excuse it did I not love you to distraction. In fact, my brother was observing us; the least attempt on your part to address me would have been my ruin: but could you not have felt jealousy without making it conspicuous? I understand the glances of your eyes; I could easily have read in your looks what others could not perceive as I did; but alas! I saw in them no appearance of what I wished to see: I own that love was there; but

was it love that should have shewn itself at such a time? Rage and displeasure should have darted forth: you ought to have contradicted every thing I said; have flattered another woman before my eyes:—in short, you ought to have been jealous, since you had every apparent cause to be so.

But instead of these natural evidences of real love, you bestowed on me a thousand praises. You took the same hand that I had given to the duke, as if it had given you no cause of displeasure, and I expected that you were going to congratulate me on the attachment of the most respectable man of our court. Insensible being!—is it thus that love is shewn? Is it thus you are beloved by me? Ah! had I thought you so cold before I loved you as I do!—What then? Though I had perceived all that I now perceive, and more, if possible, I could not have resisted the impulse of loving you. It is a bias of soul over which I had no power, and which . . . but when I think of the moments of delight this passion has afforded me, I cannot repent of having conceived it.

What should I not do, then, if I were satisfied with you, since I am so transported with love at the time I have most cause to complain! But you know the difference; you have seen me satisfied, you have seen me displeased. I have uttered complaints to you, yet in anger or in joy, you have always seen me the most affectionate of women.

Will so noble a disposition inspire you with no emulation? Love, my dear Insensible! love as ardently as you are loved. The soul finds

no true pleasure but in love. The excess of bliss springs from excess of passion; and indifference is a greater foe to those who cherish it, than to those whom it withstands. Ah! had you once really known the genuine transport of affection, how would you envy those who feel it. Even for the possession of your heart I would not be the owner of your cold tranquility. I prize my raptures as the greatest blessings that were ever mine, and I would rather be condemned to see you no more, than to see you without feeling those emotions which your presence inspires.

LETTER V

Is it to put my docility to the test that you write to me in the manner which you do? or is it really possible that you can think all that you have said to me? Believe me capable of loving another!—grant me patience!—though my delicacy is deeply wounded by this opinion, yet I, who love you more than mortal ever was loved, have frequently entertained it of *you*. But to believe this infidelity consummated, to heap invectives upon me, and to labor to persuade me that I shall never see you more, that is what I cannot endure. I have been jealous, for no perfect love is free from jealousy; but I have never been brutal. Your idea has always been present to me, and even amidst my greatest anger I have still recollected that it was *you* who were the object of my suspicions.

Alas! how many faults do I perceive in your

passion; how little are you capable of loving, and how easy it is to discover that you have no love in your heart, since all that drops unpremeditatedly from you is so unworthy the name of love. Alas! that heart which I have purchased with the whole of my own! that heart which I have merited by so many transports, so much fidelity, and which you assured me was mine, is capable of offending me thus! Its first impulse is to pour forth injurious language; and when you allow it to act for itself, it expresses nothing but outrage. Go, ungrateful as you are! I will leave you your suspicions to punish you for having conceived them; the belief that I am tender and faithful ought to be sufficiently dear to you to make a doubt of my being so a torment. It would be easy for me to cure you of your suspicion, nor is the power of keeping your resentment alive consistent with my own repose. . . . But I would have you abjure an error which only avenges me:—if you think I resent the injury you have done me, then still believe the rest of your suspicions—I am the most faithless of women.

I have, nevertheless, not seen the man who causes your jealousy; the letter which is pretended to be mine is not so, and there is no proof to which I could not submit without fear, if I chose to give you that satisfaction. But why should I give it to you? Is it by invectives that it is to be obtained? Would you not have cause to think me as despicable as you represent me, if you owed my justification to your menaces? You will, you say, never see me more; you leave Lisbon for fear of being un-

fortunate enough to meet me; and you would poinard the dearest of your friends if he committed against you the reason of bringing you into my presence. Cruel man! what has the sight of me done to you, that it should be so insupportable? It has never been to you the harbinger of aught but pleasures; you have never read in my eyes anything but love, and their ardent desire to express it; and is this a cause to oblige you to quit Lisbon, that you may never see me more? If this be the only reason for going, do not go. I will spare you the trouble of avoiding me; and besides it is rather I who ought to fly than you. The sight of me has cost you only the indulgence of suffering yourself to love, while the sight of you has cost me all the glory and all the happiness of my life!

I confess that it has also been to me a source of bliss. O! when I picture to myself the secret emotions which I felt whenever I thought I saw you amidst the throng!—the soft languor which stole away my senses whenever I met your eyes!—the inexpressible transports of my soul whenever we had the opportunity of a moment's conversation!—I know not how I was able to exist before I saw you, nor how I shall exist when I see you no more!—But what I have felt, you ought to have felt; you were beloved, and you told me that you loved; yet you are the first to propose seeing me no more! —Ah! you shall be satisfied—never while I live will I see you again.

It would, however, give me extreme pleasure to reproach you personally with your ingrati-

tude, and my revenge would, methinks, be more complete, if my eyes and all my actions confirmed to you my innocence. That innocence is so perfect!—the falsehood which has been told you is so easy to refute, that you could not talk with me, even for a quarter of an hour, without being convinced of your injustice, and without dying of regret that you had committed it. This idea has already twice or thrice prompted me to fly to your habitation, and I do not know whether it will not lead me thither, in spite of myself, before the day is at an end: for my anger is violent enough to deprive me of my reason. But no, I have so long been in the delightful habit of studying your disposition and wishes, that I am led to fear I should displease you by so bold a measure. I have always seen you act with unequalled discretion; you have been more careful than myself of my reputation; nay, you have even carried your precautions sometimes so far as to compel me to complain of them. What then would you say, if I were to do anything which could betray our amours, and affect my honor amongst persons of character? You would despise me, and I should die if I thought you capable of it; for whatever happens, I wish always to possess your esteem.

Complain! abuse me! betray me! hate me; since you can do it; but never despise me. From the moment that your love no longer constitutes your felicity I may live without it, but I cannot live without your esteem, and I believe this is the reason why I am so impatient to see you: for it is not possible that my

impatience can arise from tenderness: I should be mad indeed to love a man who treats me as I am treated by you.

Nevertheless, if your anger be considered under a proper point of view, it appears to be caused solely by an excess of passion. You would not be so transported with anger, if your love were less vehement. Ah! why cannot I persuade myself of this truth! how dear to me, then, would be the outrages which you have committed against me! But no, I will not flatter myself with this pleasing delusion. You are guilty.—Even should you not be so, I will believe it, that I may punish you for having suffered me to think so. I shall not go today to any place where you can see me; I shall pass the afternoon with the Marchioness de Castro, who is indisposed, and whom you do not visit. To conclude, I am resolved to be angry, and this is perhaps the last letter that you will ever receive from me.

LETTER VI

Is it indeed I who am now writing to you? Are you the same being that you formerly were? By what miracle does it happen that you have testified your love to me without its inspiring my joy? I have seen you manifest an ardor and impatient anxiety; I have read in your eyes the same desires to which you have always hitherto found my feelings in such perfect accordance. They were no less ardent than when they constituted my sole felicity. I am as

tender, as faithful, as I ever was; and yet I find myself cold and careless. It seems as if you had only cheated my senses by an illusion which wanted the power to reach my heart.

Ah! how dear do those reproaches cost me which you draw down upon yourself! Of how many transports am I not robbed by a single day of your negligence! I know not what secret demon incessantly whispers to me that it is to my anger I owe all your tender assiduities, and that there is more policy than sincerity in the sentiments which you have avowed. It must, in truth, be confessed, that delicacy is a gift of love which is not always so precious as we would persuade ourselves. I acknowledge that it gives a zest to our pleasures, but then what keenness it adds to our sorrows. I still imagine that I see you in that absence of mind which has caused me so many sighs. Do not, my love, deceive yourself on this point: your ardors are the source of all my felicity, but they would be the source of all my indignation, if I thought I owed them to anything save the natural impulse of your heart. I fear studied actions much more than coldness of temperament. Shall I tell you the whole of my fancies on this subject? It was the excess of your transports yesterday which gave birth to my suspicions. You seemed out of yourself; and through all that you appeared to be I sought your real self. O heavens! what would have become of me had I found you guilty of dissimulation? I prefer your love to my fortune, to my glory, to my life; but I could more easily support the certainty of your hatred, than the deceitful semblance of your

love. It is not to the exterior that I look, but to the feelings of the soul. Be cold, be negligent, be even fickle, if you can be so, but never dissimulate. Deception is the greatest crime that can be committed against love; and I would much sooner pardon you for infidelity, than for using art to conceal it from my knowledge. You said a number of fine things to me yesterday afternoon, and I wish you could have seen yourself at that moment as I saw you. You would have found yourself quite a different being from what you generally are. Your mien was yet more noble than it naturally is, your passion sparkled in your eyes, and rendered them more piercing and more tender. I saw that your heart was on your lips! Oh! how happy am I, if it did not show itself there under false colors! In truth, I put too much to the test, and it is not in my power to try you less than I do. The pleasure of loving with my whole soul is a bliss for which I am indebted to you, nor is it now possible for you to ravish it from me. I know full well that in spite of myself I shall always adore you, and I am equally certain that I shall still adore you, even in spite of yourself. These are dangerous assurances; yet why should they be? Yours is not a heart that must be retained by fear; I should never feel assured of the safety of my conquest, if I preserved it by that tie alone. Politeness and gratitude count for much in friendship, but they go for nothing in love. We must obey the heart without consulting the reason. By the sight of a beloved object the soul is rapt away, however strong our reason may be—at least such I feel is my case with

regard to you. It is neither the habit of seeing you, nor the fear of giving you pain by my absence, that compels me to seek your presence . . . it is an irresistible eagerness which springs from the heart, without artifice, and without reflection. I frequently seek you even in places where I am sure that I shall not find you. If it be thus with you, the instinct of our hearts will doubtless make them everywhere meet each other. I am compelled to pass the greater part of the day in a place where, alas! you cannot be. But let us abandon ourselves to the passion which fills our hearts, let us allow our desires to guide us, and you fill find that we shall not fail to pass agreeably even those hours which we cannot pass together.

LETTER VII

Let us not keep our vows, my friend, I conjure you! It costs us too much to keep them. Let us see each other, and, if possible, let it be immediately. You have suspected me of infidelity; you have declared your suspicions in a manner the most insulting; yet I love you more dearly than myself, and cannot live without seeing you. Wherefore impose on ourselves a voluntary absence, have we not enough to experience that is inevitable? Come, then, restore perfect joy to my soul by a moment of unrestrained conversation.

You tell me you wish to come only to entreat my pardon! Ah! come, though it be to reproach me; come, I conjure you. I would rather

see your eyes darting anger, than not see them at all; but I hazard nothing in leaving you the choice. I know I shall see them affectionate, and glowing with love; for so they have already appeared this morning at church. I read in them the shame of your credulity and in mine you must have seen the assurance of your pardon. Let us speak no more of this quarrel; or if we do speak of it, let it be to guard ourselves from such another. How could either of us doubt that our love was reciprocal? It is but for love that we exist. Such a heart as I have would never have been given me, had it not been destined to be filled with your image; you would not have the soul you possess, had you not been formed to love; and it was only that you might be loved to the degree you merit, and that you might love as much as you are beloved, that heaven made us susceptible of the flame. But tell me, I pray you, have you felt what I have felt since we pretended to be at strife? For never have we been so in reality; we are incapable of being so, and our destinies prevail over every cause of displeasure. Great God! how painful have I found this dissimulation! How have my eyes done violence to themselves in disguising their expression; and what foes must we be to ourselves, to check confidence for a moment, where there is love such as ours.

My feet involuntarily led me where I was likely to meet you. My heart, so sweetly accustomed to overflow at your approach, sprung to my eyes to express its delight, and, as I forced myself to refuse it their aid, it smote

me with such pangs as can be conceived only by those who have felt them.

I think, too, that one soul has animated us. I have met you in places where chance alone could not have brought you; and if I must confess all my little vanities, I have never seen so much love in your looks as since you have endeavored to conceal it. How silly it is to torment ourselves thus! Why do we not unveil our whole souls to each other? I knew all the tenderness of yours, and I could have distinguished all the emotions of its love from those of any other; but I knew not your anger nor your pride. I knew you were capable of jealousy since you could love; but I knew not what character that passion would assume in your heart. It would have been treachery to leave me longer in doubt of it; and I cannot but feel grateful to your injustice, since it has led me to so important a discovery. I did wish you to be jealous, I have found you so; but now renounce your jealousy as I renounce my curiosity. Whatever look a lover wears, there is none that so becomes him as the happy lover's air. It is a great error to say that the lover is a dull and uninteresting being when he is blessed. He who is not pleasing in such a character, would be less so in any other. Where there is not refinement enough to wear it with advantage, it is the heart that must be blamed and not the happiness.

Come quickly, my love, come quickly, and confirm this truth. I should be unwilling indeed to lose time upon so long a letter, did I not know that you cannot see me at the hour I am writing to you. Whatever pleasure I find

in thus conversing with you, how infinitely more delightful would be a mutual conversation! This is solitary joy which I only taste, but in our interviews you partake the pleasure.

Yet, I cannot have the one but when decorum will permit; while the other depends on myself alone. At this moment, when every person in our house is at rest, and perhaps feels happy in being able to repose, I enjoy a happiness that the sweetest sleep could not yield me. I write to you; my heart speaks to you as if you could reply to it; it consecrates to you its waking hours and its impatience. Ah! how happy are we when we truly love! How I pity those who languish in the inactivity to which freedom gives birth. Good morning to you my friend, the day begins to dawn. It had dawned much sooner than usual had it consulted my impatience; but it is not in love as we are. I must pardon then its slowness, and endeavor to beguile it by a few hours' slumber, that it may be the less insupportable.

LETTER VIII

Think, my love, to what an extreme you have been wanting in foresight! Ah! unfortunate that you are, you have been misled, and you have misled me by illusive hopes. The passion upon which you raised so many projects of delight, presents you nothing now but sad despair, despair only to be equalled by the cruelty of the separation that occasions it. Must then this separation, to which my grief,

ingenious as it is, can give no name sufficiently expressive of its horror, must it forever take from me the sight of those dear eyes in which I was used to see so much love! those eyes that were to me as everything, and gave me full content!

Alas! mine are deprived of the only beams that animated them! they have nothing left but tears, and I have only used them in incessant weeping, since I heard you were resolved upon a separation; it will be insupportable to me, and must speedily bring me to the grave.

Nevertheless, I seem to have a love for the misery which you alone have brought upon me. My life was at your disposal from the first moment I beheld you, and I feel some pleasure in sacrificing it to you.

A thousand times a day I send my sighs to you, they seek you everywhere; yet all they bring me back in recompense for so many disquietudes is the too sure foreboding of my hapless fortune, which cruelly will not permit me to indulge a hope, but at every moment whispers, cease, unhappy Marianne! cease to consume thyself in vain, nor longer seek a lover whom thou wilt never see again. He has passed the seas but to avoid thee; he is in France encircled with pleasures; he thinks not for a moment on thy grief, he absolves thee from thy tenderness, and thanks thee not for it. But no, I cannot bring myself to think of you so injuriously; I am but too much interested in justifying you. I will not believe that you have forgotten me.

Am I not sufficiently wretched, without tormenting myself with unjust suspicions? And wherefore should I endeavor to banish the remembrance of all the attentions which you lavished to convince me of your love? Those sweet attentions so charmed me, that I should be indeed ungrateful, did I not love you with all the warmth my passion inspired, while I enjoyed the proofs of yours. How is it that the recollection of moments so delightful should become thus painful? Why must they, in contradiction to their nature, serve only to oppress my heart? Alas! your last letter reduced it to a strange condition: its agitation was so strong, that it seemed endeavoring to separate itself from me, and go in quest of you. I was so overcome with these violent emotions, that I remained more than three hours bereft of all sense—I wished not to return to a life which I must lose for you, since I am not to preserve it for your sake: however, in spite of myself, I again beheld the light. I did flatter myself with the idea that I was dying for love; and besides, I rejoiced to be no more exposed to feel my heart torn with anguish for your absence.

Since this attack I have been several times ill; but can I be ever free from sufferings, while deprived of seeing you? I bear them, nevertheless, without a murmur, since they proceed from you. Is this then my recompense for loving you so tenderly? But it matters not; I am resolved to adore you all my life, and never to look upon another. You will do well too, I assure you, to love no other person. Could you be satisfied with a passion less ar-

dent than mine? You will, perhaps, meet with more beauty (though you have told me I was sufficiently beautiful), but you will never meet with so much love—and all the rest is nothing.

Do not fill up your letter with affairs of no importance, nor tell me again to remember you. I cannot forget you, neither do I forget that you have given me hope that you would come to pass some time with me—Alas! why not your whole life? Were it possible for me to quit this miserable cloister, I would not wait in Portugal for the fulfilment of your promise. Regardless of appearances, I would fly to seek you, love you, and follow you through the world. I dare not flatter myself that this can ever be; I will not cherish a hope that would assuredly yield me some pleasure; henceforth I will be sensible to grief alone.

I own, however, that the opportunity my brother has afforded me of writing to you, has excited some sensation of joy in me, and for a moment suspended my despair. I conjure you to tell me wherefore you sought, as you did, to capitivate my soul, since you well knew you were to leave me! And wherefore have you been so eager to make me unhappy? Why did you not leave me in the repose of my cloister? Had I done you any wrong? Yet pardon me, I impute nothing to you; I have no right to think of blame; I accuse only the severity of my fate: in separating us, it has inflicted all the evil that it could. It cannot separate our hearts; love, stronger than fate, has united them forever: if my heart is still dear to you, write to me often. I surely merit that you should take some little pains to let me know

the state of your heart, and of your fortune. Above all, come to see me. Adieu! I know not how to quit this paper; it will fall into your hands. Would the same happiness were mine! Alas, senseless that I am! I well know that is not possible. Adieu—I can proceed no further. Adieu; love me always, and be the cause of my enduring still severer sorrow.

LETTER IX

It is doing the greatest injustice in the world to the sentiments of my heart, to endeavour to make them known to you by what I write. How happy should I be could you truly judge of them by the warmth of your own! but this I must not expect from you, and I cannot refrain from saying, much less bitterly indeed than I feel it, that you ought not to wrong me, as you do, by a forgetfulness which drives me to despair, and which is even disgraceful to yourself.

It is but just, at least, that you should suffer me to complain of the evils I anticipated, when I saw you were resolved to quit me. I am now quite convinced I was mistaken in supposing that, because the excess of my love made me appear above suspicion, and merited more fidelity than is usually to be met with, you would act more nobly than is the general practice upon such occasions.

The inclination you have to betray me prevails, in truth, over the justice that you owe me for all I have done.

I should certainly be very unhappy if you were to love me only because I love you, and I should lament not owing everything to your incination alone: but even this is not the case —I have not received a letter from you these six months.

I attribute all these sufferings to the blindness with which I indulged my affection for you. Ought I not to have foreseen that my pleasures would terminate much sooner than my love? Could I hope that you would remain all your life in Portugal, and renounce your fortune and your country to think only of me? My sorrows admit of no relief, and the remembrance of my joys overwhelms me with despair.

Alas! and all my wishes then are unavailing! . . . and I shall never again behold you in this room with all that ardor and rapturous emotion which you were accustomed to display. But alas! I mistake, I know but too well now that the transports which took entire possession of my head and heart, were excited in you only by the transient feeling of pleasure, and that with that feeling they expired.

In those too happy moments I ought to have called reason to my aid to moderate the fatal excess of my delights, and warn me of all I suffer now: but I gave myself up entirely to you, and I was in no state to think of what would have empoisoned my bliss, and prevented me from fully enjoying the ardent expressions of your passions. I was too happy in the consciousness of your presence, to reflect that you would be one day separated from me.

I recollect, however, having sometimes said you would render me unhappy; but those alarms were soon dissipated. I even found pleasure in sacrificing them to you, and in abandoning myself entirely to the enchantment and deceit of your protestations. I well know the remedy for all my sufferings, and I should soon be relieved from them could I cease to love you: but alas! what a remedy is this! No! I would endure yet more, rather than forget you. Alas! is it in my power to forget you! I cannot reproach myself with having for one moment wished to divest myself of love for you: you are more to be pitied than I am, and it is better to suffer as I do, than enjoy the insipid pleasures that you find among your beauties of France.

I envy not your indifference. You excite my compassion. I defy you to forget me entirely. I flatter myself with having such power over your soul, that without me all your joys must be imperfect; and I am more fortunate than you, because I am more occupied.

I have been lately appointed to receive the visitors in the parlor of the convent. All who speak to me think I am insane; I know not what I reply to them: and certainly the nuns must be as insane as myself, to think me capable of any charge. Ah! I envy the happiness of Emmanuel and Francisco:* why am not I continually with you as they are? I was willing to follow you, and surely I should have served you with more zeal.

I wish for nothing in the world but to see

*M. de Chamilly's pages.

you . . . at least remember me. I content myself now with your rememberance, but I dare not assure myself of it. I did not confine my hopes to being remembered by you when I saw you every day: but you have made me feel that I must submit to all that you decree. Nevertheless I do not repent of having adored you; I rejoice that you subdued my soul. Your cruel, and perhaps eternal absence, diminishes, in no degree, the warmth of my affection. I make no secret of it; I would have it known to all the world; I have sacrificed decorum to you—I delight, I triumph in the sacrifice. As I have once loved you, my honour and religion shall henceforth consist in loving you through life.

I do not tell you all these things to induce you to write to me. Ah no! do not constrain yourself; I would have nothing from you that does not flow directly from your heart, and I refuse all testimonies of love which you have power to withhold. I shall have pleasure in excusing you, because perhaps you will have pleasure in not taking the trouble to write; for I feel entirely disposed to pardon all your faults.

A French officer this morning had the charity to speak of you to me for more than three hours. He told me peace was made with France. If that be the case, could you not come here and take me back with you? But I am not worthy of that; do what you please; my love no longer depends on your conduct to me.

Since your departure I have not enjoyed a

single moment's health, and I have had no kind of pleasure but in repeating your name a thousand times a day. Some of the nuns who know the deplorable state into which you have plunged me, speak of you very frequently. I go as seldom as possible out of the room where you have been so many times, and I look incessantly at your portrait, which is a thousand times dearer to me than life. It affords me some pleasure; but it likewise causes me a great deal of anguish when I think that I shall, perhaps, never see you again. Yet wherefore should it be possible that I shall never see you again? Have you for ever abandoned me? Alas! I despair. Your poor Marianne can support herself no longer . . . she sinks as she concludes this letter. Adieu, adieu . . . have pity on me.

LETTER X

What will become of me, and what would you have me do? I find my situation widely different from what I had conceived it would be. I did expect that you would write to me from every place you passed through, and that your letters would be very long; that you would sustain my passion by the hope of seeing you again; that an entire confidence in your fidelity would afford me some degree of repose, and that, in the meantime, I should remain in a state not quite intolerable; free from extreme anguish. I had even conceived some feeble projects of using every effort of which I should be capable to effect my cure, could I be once

thoroughly assured that you had quite forgotten me. Your absence, some feelings of devotion, the fear of utterly ruining all that remains of health by such incessant watchings and anxieties, the little probability of your return, the coldness of your love and of your last farewell, your departure, grounded upon very insufficient pretexts, and a thousand other reasons, which are but too good and yet too unavailing, all seemed to promise me, should it become necessary, an effectual aid: in short have nothing to contend with but myself I could never suspect all my weakness, nor apprehend all that I now suffer.

Alas! how much am I to be pitied that you do not share my grief, but that I alone am wretched. The thought is death to me. I die, too, with the fear that you were never really sensible of our pleasures. Yes, I see now the treachery of your whole conduct. You deceived me every time you said you were delighted to be alone with me. To my importunate fondness only I have owed your transports and your seeming warmth. You deliberately laid a plan to ensnare me: you considered my passion as a triumph for yourself, but never did it deeply touch your heart. Are you not sadly pitiable, and must you not possess indeed very little delicacy, if this be all the satisfaction you have found in my affection? How is it possible that with so much love, I have not been able to render you completely blest? I regret, for your sake alone, the innumerable pleasures you have lost; must I feel too that you have not been willing to enjoy them? Ah! had you but known

them, you would surely find that they are of infintely greater value than the poor triumph of deceiving me; you would feel that there is a far greater happiness, a sweeter thrill, in passionately loving than in being loved. I know not what I am, nor what I wish for. I am racked by a thousand opposite tortures. Can so deplorable a condition be conceived? I love you to distraction, yet have such consideration for you that I would not dare, perhaps to wish that you were agitated by the same feelings. I should kill myself, or I should die of grief, did I believe that you have never any rest, that your whole life is nothing but vexation and distress, that you weep incessantly, and that every thing is hateful to you. My own sufferings are more than I can bear; how then should I support the anguish of yours, which would wound me a thousand times more deeply?

But yet I cannot bring myself to wish that you should never think of me, and, to speak sincerely to you, I am madly jealous of every thing that gives you pleasure, that gratifies your heart, or even your taste, while in France.

I know not why I write to you. I foresee that you will merely pity me, and it is not your pity that I want. I am irritated with myself when I reflect on all that I have sacrificed to you. I have lost my reputation, I have exposed myself to the fury of my relations, to the severity of our laws against offending nuns, and to your ingratitude which, of all these misfortunes, appears to me the greatest.

Nevertheless, I plainly feel that my remorse is not sincere; that, with my heart's entire

sanction, I would have run still greater dangers for you, and I find a horrible delight in having risked my life and honor. Ought not all I hold most dear to have been at your disposal. And shall I not rejoice in having so devoted them? I even think my sufferings and my love are not enough, though, alas! I have little reason to be satisfied with you. Faithless that I am, I live and endeavour to preserve existence, rather than to lose it. Ah! I almost die with shame; my despair exists then in my letters only! Had I loved as much as I a thousand times declared I did, should I not, long since, have died? I have deceived you, and you have reason to complain of me. Alas! why do you not complain? I have seen your departure, I cannot hope ever to see you return, and yet I still exist. I have been insincere to you, I implore your pardon: . . . but do not grant it to me. . . . Treat me severely.

Think not that my feelings are sufficiently ardent. Be yet more difficult to be satisfied. Tell me you wish that I may die for love of you. Assist me thus, I pray you, to surmount the weakness of my sex, and put an end to all my irresolutions by complete despair.

The fatal termination of my woes would surely force you to think often of me; my memory would be dear to you, and you would, perhaps, be sensibly affected by my dying some extraordinary death. Would not this be better than the condition to which you have reduced me? Adieu! Would I had never seen you! Ah! how acutely I feel the fallacy of that sug-

gestion! Well do I know, at the moment I am writing to you, that I would sooner far be miserable in loving you, than wish to have never seen you.

I yield without a murmur then to my sad fate, since you have not been willing to render it more happy. Adieu; promise that if I die of grief, you will tenderly regret me, and that the violence of my passion shall at least give you a disrelish and aversion for every thing on earth. This will console me; and if I must give you up forever, I shall be glad not to leave you to any other.

Would it not be very cruel in you to avail yourself of my despair, that you might interest the more, and show how warm a passion you had excited: once more adieu. My letters are too long, I pay too little regard to your feelings; but I entreat your pardon, and dare hope you will shew some indulgence to a poor insane being, who, as you know, was not so until she loved you. Adieu, I fear I say too much to you of my misery: yet I thank you from my heart for the desperation you have caused me, and loath the tranquility in which I lived before I knew you. Adieu, my love increases every moment. Ah! how many things I have yet to tell you.

LETTER XI

Your lieutenant has just informed me that a tempest has obliged you to put back to a port of Algarve. I fear you must have suffered a great deal at sea, and that apprehen-

sion has so haunted me, that I have not bestowed a thought upon my own sufferings. Do you really think that your lieutenant takes more concern in what befalls you than I do? If not, why is he better informed upon the subject than I am? I short, why did you not write to me?

I am unfortunate indeed if you have not been able to find an opportunity since your departure, and still more so, if you have found one, and not been willing to write. Your injustice and your ingratitude are extreme: yet I should be driven to despair if they were to bring down upon you any misfortune, and I would much rather that they remained unpunished than see them avenged.

I refuse to yield credit to all those signs which might convince me that you no longer love, and I feel much more disposed blindly to abandon myself to my passion, than to dwell upon the reasons, which you give me, to complain of your want of attention.

How much disquietude would you not have spared me, had you, when I first knew you, shown as little tenderness, as it appears to me, that you have for some time past displayed. But who would not, like me, have been deluded by so much ardor, and who would not have believed it sincere? How long and difficult is the task of learning to suspect the sincerity of those we love!

I see plainly that the least excuse is sufficient for you; and, even without your taking the pains to make any to me, my love serves you so faithfully that I can only consent to think

you culpable, that I may enjoy the delightful pleasure of justifying you myself.

You won me entirely over by your assiduities, you inflamed me by your transports, you charmed me by the sweetness of your manners, you dispelled all my fears by your oaths. My violent inclination seduced me; and the consequences of a passion which, at its commencement, was so pleasant, so blest, are only tears, sighs, and a miserable death; nor have I any remedy whatever in my power.

It is true that in loving you I have enjoyed transcendant pleasures; but I pay for them the price of unexampled anguish: every feeling that you excite within me runs to extremes. Had I inflexibly resisted your love; had I given you occasions of uneasiness or jealousy, merely to inflame you the more; had you discovered any artificial pruderies in my deportment; had I, in short, exerted my reason in opposition to the natural predilection I felt for you, then (although my efforts must doubtless have proved futile), you would have had a right to punish me severely, and to avail yourself of your power: but I thought you worthy to be loved before you talked of loving me. You declared an ardent passion for me; I was enraptured by your avowal, and I yielded myself up to love you even to infatuation.

You were not blind as I was; why then have you permitted me to bring myself to this condition? What could you look for in my affections, which must only have been wearisome to you? You well knew you were not always to be in Portugal, and wherefore did you single me out to render me so wretched? You might car-

tainly have found some more beautiful woman in this country, with whom you might have enjoyed as much pleasure, as it was only of gross pleasure you were in pursuit; who might have loved you tenderly as long as you were in her sight, whom time might have consoled for your absence, and whom you might have quitted without perfidy or cruelty. The conduct you have pursued, displays the tyrant fond of persecuting, rather than the lover who should study only to give delight.

Alas! wherefore do you exercise so much severity upon the heart that is entirely yours? I plainly see that you are as much inclined to be prejudiced against me, as I have been to be prepossessed in your favour.

Without the aid of all my love, and without feeling that I had done anything extraordinary, I could have withstood reasons much more powerful than those that have prevailed on you to leave me. I should have thought them very weak; and there are none whatever that should have torn me from you: but you gladly availed yourself of any pretext that presented itself to you for returning to France. . . . A ship was on the point of sailing . . . why did you not let it sail? Your family had written to you.—Are you ignorant of all the persecutions which I have suffered from mine? Your honour called on you to abandon me.—Have I taken any thought of my own? You were obliged to go and serve your sovereign.—If all that is said of him be true, he has little need of your assistance, and would have excused you for not giving it.

I should have been too happy could we have passed our lives together. Since, however, a cruel absence must separate us, I must rejoice that I have not been faithless; not for all the world contains would I have been guilty of so black an action. You knew every thought of my heart, all the tenderness which I felt, yet you could resolve to leave me forever, and expose me to all the terrors which I must feel that you will never more think of me—except to sacrifice me to a new passion!

I am quite conscious that I love you like a woman who has lost her senses: yet I do not complain of all the violence of my heart: I accustom myself to its persecutions, and I even could not live without that pleasure, which I find and enjoy in loving you amidst a thousand sorrows.

But I am incessantly and extremely tormented by the hate and disgust which I feel for every thing. My family, my friends, and this convent, all are insupportable to me. All that I am obliged to see, and all that I am compelled to do, is odious in my sight: I am so jealous of my passion, that it seems to me as if all my actions, all my duties, centered in you alone: yes, I feel some scruples if I do not devote to you every moment of my life.

What, alas! should I do, were my heart not filled by so much hate and so much love? How to lead a tranquil and languishing life, could I survive all the thoughts by which I am now unceasingly occupied? I could never bear this void, this insensibility of the soul.

Every one perceives the entire change in my temper, my manners, and my person. My

mother spoke to me about it sharply, and afterwards with some degree of mildness. I know not what I said in reply to her. It seems to me as if I had confessed everything. The most rigid of the nuns take compassion upon the state to which I am reduced. It even inspires them with some regard and tenderness for me. Every body is touched with my love, yet you remain in a profound indifference, you write me nothing but cold letters, full of repetitions, half the paper is not filled, and they show plainly that while you write them, you are only anxious to get to the conclusion.

Donna Brites teased me lately to make me leave my room, and, thinking to divert me, she led me to take the air on the balcony which looks towards Mertola. I followed her, and was immediately struck with a cruel remembrance, which made me weep for the remainder of the day. She led me back, and I threw myself up to a thousand reflections on the little probability there was that I should ever be freed from my woes.

What is done to solace me sharpens my grief, and I find even in the remedies which are offered to me, particular reasons to increase my affliction. In that place I had frequently seen you pass by with an air that charmed me, and it was in that balcony that I stood on the fatal day when I began to feel the first effects of my unfortunate passion. I thought that you wished to please me, though you knew me not: I persuaded myself that you had particularly remarked me among all the others that were standing with me. I imagined that when you stopped you were glad I could see you better;

and that you wished me to admire your address when you put your horse into a gallop. I shuddered when you rode him into a dangerous spot: in short, I took a secret interest in all your actions. I felt plainly that you were not indifferent to me, and all that you did I considered as done for me.

You know but too well the consequences of this beginning; yet, though I have no longer any reason to act cautiously, I ought not to speak of them to you, lest I should render you more guilty, if possible, than you now are, and have to reproach myself with making so many useless efforts to oblige you to be faithful.—Faithful you will not be. Can I hope from my letters and my reproaches that which my love and my entire devotion to you have failed to secure from your ingratitude?

I am too certain of my misfortune; your unjust conduct leaves me not the least power to doubt of it, and, since you have abandoned me, I have every thing to dread.

Is it for me alone that you will have charms, and will you not appear pleasing in other eyes? I believe that I should not be sorry if the sentiments of others justified in some degree my own; and I could wish that all the women in France might consider you as amiable, but that none might love, and that none might please you. This idea is ridiculous, is impossible: nevertheless, I have sufficiently proved that you are not capable of a strong attachment; that you could easily forget me, without any assistance, and without being constrained to do so by a new passion.

. . . . Perhaps I even wish that you had

some treasonable pretext—I should, it is true, not be less unhappy, but you would not be so culpable.

I am convinced that though you find no great pleasure there, you continue in France of your own accord. The fatigue of a long voyage, some small remains of decency, and the fear of not making an adequate return to my transports, detain you.—Ah! you have nothing to fear from me—I shall be contented to see you now and then, and to know only that we are near each other. But perhaps I am flattering myself; while you are more interested by the rigour and coldness of another than you ever were by my love. Is it possible that severity can attach you?

But before you yield up your heart to the dominion of a violent passion, consider well the excess of my sorrows, the inconsistency of my conduct, the varied agitation of my feelings, the extravagance of my letters, my sanguine hopes, my despair, my wishes, and my jealousy.—Ah! you will make yourself miserable: I conjure you to be warned by the state in which I am, and then if I have suffered for you, to you at least my sufferings will not be useless.

Five or six months ago, you reposed in me an unwelcome confidence: you confessed candidly to me that you had loved a lady of your own country. If she detains you from me, tell me so without hesitation:—I shall no longer languish for your return.

Some remains of hope support me still; but

if I am only to hope, I would rather lose that support at once, and with it lose myself. Send me her picture, and some of her letters. Tell me all she says to you—In that I may find something to console me, or to end my sorrows.

In my present state I cannot long remain, and for me there can be no favourable change. I wish too for the picture of your brother and your lovely sister: all that relates to you is dear to me; to whatever you love I am entirely devoted. I am no longer of the same disposition that I have been. There are even moments, when I fancy that I could submit to serve her you love; your ill treatment and contempt have so humbled me, that I dare not reflect, lest I should think, that my own jealousy has been cause of your neglect, and that I have deeply injured you by my reproaches. I often feel, that I ought not to expose to you, with the frenzy that I do, those sentiments which you disapprove.

The officer has waited long for this letter: I had resolved to write in a style that should not displease you: but what an extravagant letter have I written—I must conclude—Alas! I cannot resolve to do it. While I write, I seem to converse with you, and you almost appear present to me. . . . The next shall not be so long nor so troublesome; under this assurance you may open and read it—It is true I ought not to speak to you of a passion which displeases you, and I will speak of it no more.

It is now nearly a year, since I gave myself up to you without reserve. Your passion ap-

peared to me so ardent, so sincere, and I could never have thought that my fondness would have disgusted you so much as to induce you to take a journey of five hundred leagues and expose yourself to all the dangers of the sea, to escape from it. No one ever experienced such treatment as I have done. You can remember my shame, my confusion, my disorder; but you do not remember, that you bound yourself by oaths to love me forever.

The officer who is to bring you this, sends to me for the fourth time to tell me that he wishes to be gone. How very pressing he is! He too abandons, no doubt, some unhappy one of this country. Adieu! I suffer more in concluding this letter, than you did in leaving me, though perhaps forever. Adieu! I dare not call you by those thousand endearing names I would; I dare not abandon myself to my feelings. I love you more, a thousand times more than I thought. How dear you are to me!—Oh, how cruel you are to me!—You never write to me—I cannot refrain from telling you that once more—I am beginning again, and the officer will be gone—No matter—let him go! I write more for myself than you, I only seek to console myself. The length of my letter will alarm you—you will not read it. What have I done, that I should be thus miserable, and why have you embittered the remainder of my life? Oh that I had been born in another country! Adieu! forgive me, I dare not now ask you to love me—Behold to what my fate has reduced me! Adieu.

LETTER XII

I write to you for the last time; and I hope to convince you, by the difference of the style and manner of this letter, that you have at length persuaded me that you no longer love me, and that, therefore, I ought not to love you any longer.

I shall accordingly send you, by the first conveyance, all that I yet possess of yours. Fear not that I shall write to you; I will not even write your name on the packet. I have charged Donna Brites with the whole of the arrangement, her in whom I have been accustomed to place confidence of a very different kind; her care will be less suspected than mine; she will take every necessary precaution, in order to assure me that you have received the portraits and the bracelets that you gave me.

I, however, wish you to know that I have for some days felt strongly inclined to burn and destroy every relic that would remind me of you, those pledges of your love that were so dear to me; but I have already discovered so much weakness, that I am convinced I could never be capable of proceeding to these extremities. I am determined, therefore, to endure all the anguish of parting with them, and give you at least a little chagrin.

I will acknowledge, to my shame and yours, that I have found myself more attached to those trifles than I am willing to describe, and I felt that I stood in need of all the arguments

reason could muster, to enable me to part with any of them, even when I could no longer flatter myself with your attachment; but perseverance in any one design works wonders. I delivered them into the hands of Donna Brites. —How many tears this resolution cost me! After a thousand emotions, and a thousand incertitudes which you are a stranger to, and of which I shall assuredly render you no account . . . . I have conjured her never to mention them to me, nor restore them to me, though I should only ask to look upon them once more, and to send them to you without my knowing anything of it.

I never knew the excess of my love until I exerted every effort to cure myself of it. I believed I should never have undertaken such a task could I have forseen the difficulties and the obstacles to its success; for I am persuaded that I should have felt less disagreeable sensations in loving you, ingrate as you are! than in abandoning you forever. I have proved that you were less dear to me than my passion, and I have had strange emotions to struggle with, after your injurious conduct had rendered your person odious to me.

The natural pride of my sex has not assisted me in forming any resolutions against you. Alas! I have suffered your contempt, I could have supported your hatred, and all the jealousy which your attachment to another could have given me; I should have had at least some passion to struggle with; but your indifference is insupportable to me; your impertinent protestations of friendship, and the ridicu-

lous civilities of your last letter, have shown me that you have received all mine, and that they have been incapable of inspiring the least emotion in your heart, and yet you have read them! Ingrate, I am yet weak enough to be distracted at the idea of not being able to flatter myself that you never received them.

I heartily detest you. Did I ever ask you to tell me sincerely the truth? Why could you not suffer me to enjoy my passion? You had only to desist from writing to me; I should not have sought the fatal truth. Am I not indeed unfortunate, in that I could not oblige you to take some pains to deceive me, and to be no longer able to excuse me? Know that I perceive you are unworthy of my sentiments, and that I have discovered all the dark shades of your character.

Therefore (if all I have done for you may entitle me to ask any favour at your hands), I conjure you to write to me no more, and to assist me to forget you entirely. If you were to evince, in even the slightest manner, that the perusal of this letter pained you, I should perhaps believe you, and perhaps also your confession would inflame me with sentiments of anger, and with other sensations.

Do not, then, interfere with my conduct; you might overturn all my designs and resolutions, whatever part you take. I do not wish to know the success of this letter. Trouble not the state for which I am preparing myself; you ought to be content with what you have already made me suffer. Whatever designs you might have formed for rendering

me unhappy, deprive me not of my present state of incertitude. I hope I shall in time become a little more tranquil. I promise not to hate you; I feel too forcibly the violence of my sentiments to dare to undertake it. I am persuaded that I shall find in this country a more faithful lover. . . . But, alas! who can inspire me with love? Can the passion of another occupy my soul? Has mine had any influence over you? and have I not felt that a wounded heart can never forget the cause of those transports which were unknown to it; that all its emotions are attached to the idol who gave birth to them; that its first wound can neiter be healed nor effaced; that all the passions which offer their assistance to fill it with other sensations, and soothe it into peace, promise in vain that delicious sensibility which it can no longer find; that all the pleasures it seeks, without being anxious to find them, only serve to prove that nothing is so dear as the remembrance of its woes. Why have you made me experience the imperfection and vexation of an attachment which ought not to have lasted forever, and the miseries which attend a violent passion, that is not returned? Alas! why does blind affection and cruel destiny determine us to attach ourselves to those who are insensible, rather than to those who would feel an equal passion! When even I might hope for some solace in a new amour, and that I might find at length a faithful lover, I pity my own case so much, that I would not place the least deserving of mankind in the situation to which

you have reduced me; and though I am under no obligation to show you any tenderness, I could not bring myself to exercise so cruel a vengeance even upon you, should it, from any unforeseen change, ever be in my power. I even now seek excuses for your conduct; for I feel too well that a nun cannot appear so interesting to you as another: yet, methinks, if the heart left reason a choice, your sex would rather be attached to them than to other women; they have nothing to prevent them from surrendering their whole souls to the delicious impression of love; the numerous objects which attract female attention in the intercourse with the world have no power over them; they are secluded from all those scenes which please the fancy and vitiate the heart; they dwell only on the idea of their lover. I often fancy that it must be unpleasing to a lover, to see her in whom his happiness is centered, perpetually occupied with trifles. How can he suffer her, without being driven to despair, to be continually talking of balls, assemblies, operas, walks, dresses &c? perpetually exposed to fresh causes of jealousy. Then they are obliged to interchange the reciprocities of politeness, of complaisance, and conversation; and what lover can feel assured that they do not enjoy amusement, I will not say pleasure, on those occasions? Oh! they ought to relinquish a lover who is not credulous and unsuspecting as a child, and who cannot, without hesitation, credit all they tell him, and who cannot see them, without emotion, flirt with every one who addresses.

But I have no intention of proving to you, by a chain of reasoning, that you ought to love me—that would be a very poor method; and besides, I have employed much better ones which have failed. I know too well my destiny to endeavor to surmount it. I shall be unhappy to my latest hour: was I not so even when I saw you every day? I used to be dying with alarm lest you should prove unfaithful; I wished to see you every moment, though I knew it was impossible; I was terrified with the danger you run in entering the convent; I was driven to despair when you were with the army; I was miserable in thinking that I was not more beautiful and more worthy of you; I was angry with fate for placing me in the middle ranks of life, and I often thought that the attachment you appeared to have for me might prove prejudicial to your fortune; I thought that I could not love you sufficiently; on your account I dreaded the anger of my friends, and I was indeed as miserable as I am now.

If you had given me any proofs of your passion after you left Portugal, I would have exerted every effort to leave it too; I would have disguised myself, and wandered until I had found you; but alas! what would have become of me if you had deserted me in France? Laden with disgrace, myself and my family covered with shame, who, since you no longer love me, have become more dear to me than before.

You perceive that I can coolly reflect that I might have been in a more miserable situation

than I even am now; that I can speak to you at least rationally for once in my life. Whether this moderation may please you, and make you feel better satisfied with me, I wish not to know. I have already entreated you to write to me no more, and I earnestly repeat the entreaty.

Have you never reflected on your unworthy treatment of me? Do you never think that you owe more to me than all the world besides? I have loved you madly; for your sake, how have I contemned everything else!—You have not acted like a man of honor. You must, from the first, have had a natural aversion for me, since my passion has failed to excite in you a love equally desperate. I have suffered myself to grow enamoured of very common attractions.—What sacrifices have you made for me? Have you not been constantly in search of a thousand amusements? Have you renounced the sports of the town or of the country? Were you not the first to join the army, and are you not the last to return? You wantonly exposed your person, although I conjured you for my sake to be careful of yourself. You have not endeavored to establish yourself in Portugal, where you are so beloved; one letter from your brother drew you from me, you hesitated not a moment:—and I do not know that, during the whole voyage, your cheerfulness never forsook you?

It must be confessed that I have cause to hate you mortally. Ah! I have myself been the cause of my own misfortunes; my love was sincere as it was ardent; had I been less sincere, you would have loved me more: to

excite an ardent passion required greater address, and love alone is not sufficient to create love. You wished that I should love you; and when you had formed the design, you left no means untried to accomplish it; you would have even resolved to love me yourself had that been necessary; but you found that without feeling any love yourself, you could succeed in your enterprise. What perfidy! Do you think this treachery shall pass unpunished? Should any chance bring you again into this country, I tell you that I would deliver you up to the vengeance of my family.

I have long abandoned myself to an idolatry, which now fills me with horror; and my remorse haunts me incessantly. I am feelingly alive to the shame of the crimes which you have made me commit, and alas! passion no longer blinds me to their enormity. When will my heart cease to be agonized? When shall I be delivered from this miserable situation? Still I think that I wish you no evil, and that I could be pleased to see you happy. But if you have a heart, can you be so?

I should like to write you another letter, to let you see that I shall in time, perhaps, regain my tranquility. What pleasure will it be to me when I can reproach you with your injurious conduct, and feel it no longer: when I can let you see that I despise you, that I can speak with cool indifference of your treachery, that I have forgotten my sorrows, that I remember you no more than I wish you to remember me.

I allow that you nave great advantage over me, you have inspired me with a passion which

has deprived me of my reason; but you have no reason to be vain on that account. I was young, I was credulous; I had been immured from my infancy in a convent; I had seen none but disagreeable persons; I had never before heard the sound of flattery, which you incessantly applied. I thought those charms and that beauty which you had found in me, and which you made me perceive for the first time myself, were justly yours: I heard you well spoken of: all the world spoke in your favor; you practiced every deception to make me love you; but I am at length awakened from the enchantment; you have assisted to break the charm, and I confess that your assistance was required.

In returning your letters, I have attentively perused the last two which you wrote me, and I have read them much oftener than I have your first letters, to prevent a relapse into my former follies—Ah! how much it cost me: and how happy I should have been if you would have allowed me to love you always! I feel that I am still too much engrossed by my injuries and your infidelities; but remember I have determined to regain a more tranquil state: this I will obtain, or release myself at once by some extremity, which you perhaps would learn without much sorrow.—But I wish nothing more of you: I am an idiot to repeat the same thing so often: I must resign you, and think no more of you; I believe too I must write to you no more—Am I obliged to render you an account of all my feelings?—I fear I am. Adieu.